

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN COLLABORATION ON MILITARY HELICOPTERS,
TACTICAL COMBAT AIRCRAFT AND NON-NUCLEAR MISSILES

REF: USNATO 6925 DTG 141842JUL78, NOTAL.

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1. THERE FOLLOWS IN PARA 2 BELOW THE TEXT OF AN
ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE ATLANTIC NEWS ON
19 JULY 1978. WE DISCUSSED THE CONTENT WITH UK
MISSION OFFICER WHO SAID THE REPORTING WAS ESSEN-
Tially CORRECT.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

- THE DEFENCE MINISTERS OF GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE
AND THE FRG LAST THURSDAY ENDED A FOUR-DAY MEETING
TO STUDY THE POSSIBILITIES OF EUROPEAN COLLABORATION
ON ARMAMENT SYSTEMS. HELD ON THE FRINGE OF THE IEPG
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(INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN PROGRAMME GROUP), THE DISCUSSIONS
MAINLY COVERED THE THREE COUNTRIES' FUTURE REQUIREMENTS,
PARTICULARLY TACTICAL COMBAT AIRCRAFT, MILITARY HELI-
COPTERS AND THE NEXT GENERATION OF NON-NUCLEAR MISSILES.
THE MINISTERS NOTABLY SIGNED A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES
ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATION IN THE PROCUREMENT
OF HELICOPTERS.

- THIS MEETING OF THE THREE COUNTRIES, WHOSE DEFENCE INDUSTRIES FORM THE NUCLEUS OF EUROPEAN INDUSTRIES, WAS NOT INTENDED TO SUPPLANT THE IEPG, THE MINISTERS POINTED OUT, BUT RATHER TO IMPART ADDED IMPETUS TO THE ROME GROUP'S WORK. THE THREE DEFENCE MINISTERS WHO ATTENDED THE MEETING, HELD FROM 10 TO 13 JULY NEAR OXFORD, ENGLAND, WERE MESSRS FRED MULLEY (GREAT BRITAIN), YVON BOURGES (FRANCE) AND HANS APEL (FRG).

- THE MEETING FOLLOWS A SIMILAR MEETING WHICH TOOK PLACE IN FRANCE LAST NOVEMBER, AND THE THREE MINISTERS PLAN TO MEET AGAIN IN FEDERAL GERMANY EARLY NEXT YEAR.

- DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON HELICOPTERS: THIS DECLARATION HAD ALREADY BEEN SIGNED BY ITALY, WHICH DID NOT TAKE PART IN LAST WEEK'S MEETING, AND IT NOTABLY STATES THAT THE FOUR COUNTRIES WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO RECONCILE FUTURE PRODUCTION. IN PARTICULAR, A STEERING COMMITTEE AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL WILL BE SET UP WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOUR COUNTRIES' HELICOPTER-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES, NAMELY "WESTLAND" (GREAT BRITAIN), "MESSERSCHMIDT" (FRG), "AEROSPATIALE" (FRANCE) AND "AGUSTA" (ITALY), AND THE ARMED FORCES OF THE COUNTRIES IN QUESTION.

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- THE HELICOPTER FIELD PRESENTS GOOD PROMISE FOR CLOSER COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE FOUR COUNTRIES SINCE ALL OF THEM HAVE A GENERALLY RECOGNISED NEED FOR A NEW FAMILY OF HELICOPTERS WITHIN ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME-SCALE, I.E., BETWEEN THE MIDDLE AND END OF THE 1980'S. THE COUNTRIES NEED TO DEVELOP AT LEAST THREE NEW KINDS OF HELICOPTERS TO TAKE OVER THE PRESENT SERIES OF ANTI-TANK, TACTICAL AND NAVAL TRANSPORT HELICOPTERS (INCLUDING ANTI-SUBMARINE HELICOPTERS).

- TACTICAL COMBAT AIRCRAFT: THE DISCUSSION ON A FUTURE TACTICAL COMBAT AIRCRAFT HINGED ON THE PROBLEM THAT BRITAIN'S NEED FOR A NEW PLANE IS RATHER MORE URGENT THAN THAT OF THE OTHER TWO COUNTRIES. GREAT BRITAIN SHOULD SHORTLY TAKE A DECISION IN REPLACING ITS 300-PLUS "JAGUAR"S AND "HARRIER"S BY 1990. BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING OF THEIR DEFENCE MINISTERS THE CHIEFS OF STAFF OF THE THREE COUNTRIES WILL ENDEAVOUR TO ESTABLISH AN OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR A TACTICAL COMBAT AIRCRAFT

FOR THE THREE COUNTRIES.

- NON-NUCLEAR MISSILES: THE MINISTERS AGREED THAT THERE WAS SCOPE FOR COLLABORATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF MISSILES TO REPLACE THE EXISTING ANTI-TANK, ANTI-SHIP, AIR-TO-AIR AND SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES. HOWEVER, THE REPLACEMENT TIMETABLES OF THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES ARE RATHER DIFFERENT.

- THE MINISTERS ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFORMALLY DISCUSS PROGRESS IN THE "MBFR" TALKS ON

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THE REDUCTION OF FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE, THE RESULTS OF THE SPECIAL UNO DISARMAMENT SESSION AND "SALT-2" NEGOTIATIONS.

- WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT THE THREE ABOVE-MENTIONED AREAS ARE THE SUBJECT OF SPECIAL STUDIES IN THE IEPG.
END TEXT. BENNETT

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